

from treating the epidemic of gun violence like we would any other public health crisis. It is interesting that even the author of this misguided policy 20 years ago now realizes it was a mistake, and he has changed his mind and wants to overturn it.

Just like automobile safety, we can take dozens of small steps to reduce gun violence. Not eliminate it altogether, but we don't stop treating cancer just because some people die; so it is with our commitment to gun safety. If we can stop a few tragic acts, it is worth it to reduce the number of attacks and save lives.

We are poised for one of the most consequential elections in anybody's memory. Let's make it count. We have an opportunity to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the LGBT community. We can join with President Obama and Secretary Clinton for enlightened national leadership, stand with the LGBT community committed to making this tragedy a turning point. This is the year to deliver on full LGBT equality and commonsense gun safety.

#### ACADEMY APPOINTEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize a group of remarkable young people from Pinellas County, Florida, who have excelled among their peers and answered the call to duty to serve their fellow Americans. These young men and women have tested and proven themselves academically, athletically, and physically, and have demonstrated the leadership skills necessary to now be offered appointments to one of our United States Service Academies.

It is an honor to recognize these young men and women from Florida's 13th Congressional District today.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point are:

Elizabeth Brown-Worthington of Gulfport, Florida, a graduate of Boca Ciega High School;

Andrew Buck of Tierra Verde, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg Catholic High School;

Sean McClair of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Osceola Fundamental High School and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School;

Tyler Mitchiner of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School;

William Moorhead of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Clearwater Central Catholic High School;

Patrick Prior of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Osceola Fundamental High School;

John Rusnak of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg Catholic High School.

Receiving appointments from Pinellas County to attend the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis are:

Connor Price of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University High School and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School;

Jared Price of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University High School and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School;

Zack Quilty of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Jesuit High School; and

Ethan Singer of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Countryside High School.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy from Pinellas County, Florida are:

Brian Brown of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Countryside High School;

Dalton Collins of Largo, Florida, a graduate of Admiral Farragut Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School;

Joseph Gannaio of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Calvary Christian High School;

Thomas "Trey" Walker of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg High School.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy from Pinellas County, Florida, are:

Jackson Misner of Tampa, Florida, a graduate of H.B. Plant High School; and

Sofia Tucker of Navarre, Florida, a graduate of Navarre High School.

Finally, receiving an appointment to attend the U.S. Coast Guard Academy is Olivia Suski of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Seminole High School and the Marion Military Institute.

These future cadets and midshipmen that we recognize today will be the future leaders of our military forces and our Merchant Marine. I wish them Godspeed in the challenges of their summer training and the academic years to follow.

These young people represent the best of America, and we each look forward to witnessing their future success and their service to country.

We, the House of Representatives, can have great confidence in our Nation's future as we entrust it to these appointees and those of my colleagues here in Congress.

#### ORLANDO MASSACRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, this is what our moments of silence have brought us:

A silent nightclub. The only sound is the frantic ringing of cell phones that would never be answered and silent bodies where there should be life, love, and pride. And, here, a silent Congress.

Mere words cannot express the depth of my rage and grief. Forty-nine lives lost in the middle of Pride Month when they should have been safe and celebrated. Forty-nine families devastated by the loss of their loved ones. Forty-

nine phones ringing and ringing and ringing.

There were also frantic texts, like Eddie Justice's final message to his mother: "Mommy, I love you. He's coming. I'm gonna die."

If you can hear these words without your heart breaking, if you can think of those little children gunned down in Newtown without breathing, if you can think of empty pews in Charleston without mourning, then truly you have lost your souls.

Hateful people like to compare LGBT equality to the sin-filled Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we here in Congress are the real Sodom and Gomorrah.

Are there not 218 Members here to stand against this bloody tide?

I ask you today: How many lives must be destroyed before Congress acts?

Nine lives? Charleston showed us nine is not enough.

Thirteen lives? Columbine showed us that 13 was not enough.

Certainly, 27 small children killed in their classrooms in Newtown? No, not enough.

The 32 lives lost at Virginia Tech, again, not enough lives. The more than 33,000 Americans killed each year by guns, not enough.

Now 49 people have been mowed down and murdered in Orlando, yet even this historic tragedy, the biggest mass murder since 9/11, hasn't been deemed big enough, horrific enough, or insidious enough to break the weak-kneed, spineless, silent Members of Congress.

Congress is happy to debate for hours about bathrooms, but bring up the gun violence killing of thousands? Absolutely not.

Radical Islam or homegrown American homophobia or a toxic stew of both may have inspired the Orlando shooter. No doubt we will learn about his disgusting motivations in the coming weeks.

But there are simple actions we can take right now, actions that would have reduced the deaths in Orlando as well as in Aurora, Newtown, San Bernardino, and at Umpqua Community College. All these killers use AR-15s. All of them used weapons of mass destruction.

First, let's make sure every gun purchase requires a background check rather than just 60 percent of gun purchases.

Why have we created a separate market for criminals, domestic abusers, and mentally ill?

Let's ban assault weapons that have time and time again caused mass bloodshed. The American people are too familiar with the AR-15, a weapon designed to hunt Americans in their most vulnerable places: the classroom, the movie theater, the nightclub.

Whether the would-be killers are Islamic extremists or American White supremacists or disgruntled coworkers, banning assault weapons would prevent mass bloodshed on the scale we saw